

WHAT IS CLAIMED:

1. A portable, self-heating thermal cushion having a thermally insulated seating region, said cushion comprising a composite laminated structure, said structure comprising a backsheet, a topsheet and an intermediate layer comprising a heat generating material, said intermediate layer being in thermal contact with said seating region of said cushion, wherein said cushion is contacted with a seating surface, and wherein said seating region is of sufficient size to extend underneath the buttocks of the user to provide a heating region generally coextensive with said seating region for warming said buttocks.
2. The cushion of Claim 1, wherein said seating region has a contact area of at least about 200cm².
3. The cushion of Claim 1, wherein said intermediate layer has at least about 30% thermal contact with said seating region.
4. The cushion of Claim 1, wherein said thermal layer has thermal characteristics and heat transfer characteristics, said thermal and heat transfer characteristics providing a heating region, said thermal and heat transfer characteristics being selected to raise the temperature of said heating region by at least 10°C above ambient temperature for a period of at least about 45 minutes.
5. The cushion of Claim 4, wherein said cushion has a simulated-use temperature profile such that the temperature of at least about 50% of said heating region is raised by at least about 10°C above ambient temperature within about 15 minutes of the commencement of heat generation and wherein a plateau temperature of at least about 10°C above ambient temperature is maintained for a period of at least about 45 minutes from the commencement of heat generation.
6. The cushion of Claim 1, wherein said backsheet and said topsheet are secured to one another around a periphery of said seating region.
7. The cushion of Claim 1, further comprising a plurality of spaced reservoirs for holding said heat generating material and wherein the area of each of said reservoirs ranges from about 1 cm² to about 50 cm².

8. The cushion of Claim 7, wherein each of said reservoirs has a depth of less than about 2 cm.
9. The cushion of Claim 8, wherein each of said reservoirs has a capacity ranging from about 0.1 grams to about 100 grams.
10. The cushion of Claim 7, wherein said cushion has a reservoir to non-reservoir area ratio ranging from about 100:1 to about 1:100.
11. The cushion of Claim 1, wherein said heat generating material is a material capable of generating heat on exposure to air.
12. The cushion of Claim 11, wherein said heat generating material comprises from about 30% to about 80% by weight of iron powder, from about 3% to about 25% by weight of carbonaceous material comprising activated carbon, non activated carbon or a mixture thereof, from about 0.5% to about 10% by weight of a metal salt, from about 1% to about 40% by weight of water, and from about 0.1% to about 10% by weight of a reducing agent.
13. The cushion of Claim 11, wherein said topsheet comprises an air-permeable material effective in controlling the flow of air to said heat generating material
14. The cushion of Claim 1, wherein said heat generating material is a material capable of generating heat by the initiation of a phase change within said material.
15. The cushion of Claim 1, wherein said heat generating material comprises two or more reactive components capable of generating heat during mixing thereof.
16. The cushion of Claim 1, wherein said cushion further comprises a waterproof or water-resistant backsheet and/or topsheet.
17. The cushion of Claim 1, wherein said cushion comprises a separate layer of cushioning on the side of said intermediate layer opposite said seating region.
18. The cushion of Claim 1, wherein said backsheet comprises a thermally-insulating material.

19. The cushion of Claim 1, wherein said topsheet comprises a microporous laminated nonwoven film and wherein said film has a moisture vapour transmission rate ranging from about 100 g/m²/24 hours to about 5000 g/m²/24 hours.